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TAGS: [PREL](#) [XA](#) [ZI](#) [AO](#) [SF](#) [MA](#) [SU](#) [NI](#) [CG](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: AF DAS PAGE'S PARIS CONSULTATIONS (FEBRUARY 10-11)

REF: A. LUANDA 69
[B](#). LUANDA 71
[C](#). LONDON 360

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Classified By: Andrew Young, Acting Political Minister-Counselor, 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#). (C) SUMMARY: AF DAS Susan Page met with French officials at the Presidency, MFA, and MOD during her February 10-11 consultations in Paris. She also met with Angola's Ambassador to France Miguel da Costa. Discussions with the French focused on Zimbabwe (France favored lifting certain sanctions as a means of supporting the MDC while maintaining the broader sanctions regime to continue pressuring ZANU-PF); Angola (relations complicated by the Falcone Affair and also the alleged presence of FLEC members in France who support Cabinda's independence); South Africa (France sees a need for enhanced South African engagement in regional issues); Madagascar (France wants the four factions to take a consensus-based approach to the way forward and for Rajoelina to compromise with the others and accept AU Jean Ping's suggestions); Sudan (the U.S. shares France's concerns about the potential difficulties should South Sudan secede in 2011); and French priorities in the southern Africa region (building partnerships with South Africa and Angola, along with Nigeria, with a long-term goal of enhancing stability in the Great Lakes region, particularly in the DRC). In her meeting with Ambassador da Costa, DAS Page raised a number of key governance and bilateral issues. END SUMMARY.

[2](#). (SBU) During her February 10-11 consultations in Paris, AF DAS Susan Page met with Presidential Advisors for Africa Remi Marechaux and Clement Leclerc; MOD Strategic Affairs Delegation Africa experts Colonel Denis Opplert, Elodie Riche, and Gregory Chauzal; MFA AF A/S-equivalent Stephane Gompertz and AF PDAS Olivier Chambard; Angolan Ambassador to France Miguel da Costa; and the Africa Regional Service staff. Africa Watcher and Africa Assistant accompanied DAS Page. The following report is organized by topic rather than by meeting.

ZIMBABWE

[3](#). (C) Presidential Advisor Clement Leclerc said there had been some progress in stabilizing Zimbabwe but that it was necessary to maintain pressure to ensure compliance with earlier GOZ commitments. He noted the need for a "careful balance" in maintaining this pressure but also in recognizing progress. He reviewed the EU sanctions issue, referring to close France-UK consultations. While remarking on the possible delisting of several entities and individuals, Leclerc stressed that other firm EU sanctions would be extended. A/S-equivalent Gompertz echoed this approach, claiming that offering these "carrots" should strengthen the MDC's position in the coalition. He also stated that this incremental lifting of sanctions could "encourage a broader

split" within ZANU-PF between hard-liners and those who recognize that a change in course is needed by demonstrating that "there are benefits to progress." DAS Page explained that a partial lifting of sanctions was likely to reduce our leverage in view of ZANU-PF's lack of meaningful progress, thereby encouraging continued ZANU-PF obstinacy in implementing the Global Political Agreement. (NOTE: The EU on February 15 delisted nine parastatals and six individuals. END NOTE.)

14. (C) Leclerc said that the GOF had just learned that a Zimbabwe delegation scheduled to meet with the EU in Brussels and possibly continue to Paris had canceled its travel plans. He was not sure why but he indicated that the GOF was thus relieved of having to figure out how to meet with the mixed (ZANU-PF and MDC) delegation had it come to Paris.

ANGOLA

15. (C) Leclerc said that France was striving to return relations with Angola to normal but that the Angolan side was still bothered by the Falcone Affair (involving extensive and illicit arms sales by several prominent French citizens during Angola's civil war) and the recent conviction of several of them, including ringleader Falcone, who is imprisoned in France. (NOTE: No Angolans were accused in the case, a point the GOF reinforced with Angola to show that the prosecution was not directed at Angola. END NOTE.) Leclerc said the Angolans remained highly irritated by the case, despite continual GOF reminders about judicial independence in France.

16. (C) Leclerc noted another significant irritant -- Angola's belief that France had not done enough to arrest or

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otherwise go after members of FLEC (supporters of an independent Cabinda) allegedly residing in France (refs A and B). Certain FLEC supporters had expressed support and even taken credit publicly for the recent attack on the Togolese national soccer team as it was traveling to Cabinda to take part in the African Cup of Nations. (NOTE: The Angolan Embassy in Paris in January sent a packet of information on FLEC, the bus attack, and what the GOA perceives as France's failure to take action against FLEC members believed to be in France. We have forwarded this information, which the Angolans furnished to other diplomatic missions in Paris, to Embassy Luanda and to AF. END NOTE.)

17. (C) DAS Page said that Washington was disappointed by recent legal and constitutional changes in Angola that represented backsliding on democratic principles, a point DAS Page had been stressing in her contacts with Angolans. This was an unfortunate reversal that was a cause for concern. She indicated that the USG would continue to convey this message to Angolans.

18. (C) On February 11, DAS Page called on Angola's Ambassador to France, Miguel da Costa, whose welcoming remarks included the observation that in a recent discussion, Portugal's Ambassador to France commented on the good relations between the U.S. and Angola. Ambassador da Costa remarked that relations between the U.S. and Angola are "excellent," and noted that "we are counting on the U.S. to help us diversify our economy." During the course of the meeting, DAS Page, as she had indicated to the French, raised a number of key issues: U.S. disappointment that the GOA stopped its national dialogue on the new constitution more than two months early; the new constitution's elimination of direct presidential elections; the need to re-set dates for the now postponed inaugural TIFA Council meeting; that the U.S. is waiting for a letter from the GOA agreeing to establish the Peace Corps in Angola; and that the U.S. wants to deepen our engagement with Angola on good governance within the extractive sectors, including the Kimberley

process and through the Strategic Partnership Dialogue.

¶9. (C) Delivering his remarks in both French and English, da Costa responded that the constitutional consultation process had completed its work; there wasn't really anything more to be discussed; and, "in the end, you can't consult forever; there's not time to ask 14 million people." Regarding the new constitution, da Costa stated that Angola's Constitutional Court had "helped" by placing presidential candidates at the head of the electoral lists and by insisting that the appointed Vice-President could only assume the powers of the President for the time needed to organize new elections. Da Costa asserted that a young democracy needs time to establish "a strong foundation," that Angola is progressing "step by step," but that "stability" is vital. Regarding the U.S. agenda, he opined that the TIFA discussions should be able to move forward because he expected that Minister of Commerce and Tourism Maria Idalina de Oliveira to remain in place at least until the 2012 elections. The Ambassador appeared not informed on Peace Corps, but was pleased to learn that the volunteers can bring technical capacity-building skills to poor, rural villages. Da Costa was not well-briefed on our extractive industries dialogue, but did launch into a long discourse on Angola's development progress since 2002, while also noting the need to create a diversified economy and a strong middle class. He offered as an area for U.S. assistance the exploitation of what he claimed were Angola's significant reserves of fresh ground water.

¶10. (C) Turning to France-Angola relations, da Costa admitted that difficulties remain from the fallout of the Falcone Affair. He was also disappointed that France was not helping TAAG, Angola's national airline (of which Da Costa was previously Director General) gain a foothold in Europe beyond Lisbon. Da Costa also complained that France was not being helpful in arresting members of FLEC who might be living in France, particularly Rodrigues Mingas, a prominent FLEC supporter, perhaps with French nationality, who reportedly expressed support in various French media for the terrorist attack on the Togolese soccer team.

¶11. (C) After meeting with Ambassador da Costa, DAS Page met with MFA A/S-equivalent Gompertz and PDAS Chambard, who said that France's efforts to improve relations with Angola have "not been easy." Gompertz expressed exasperation with the FLEC controversy, claiming that the GOF has requested any evidence Angolan authorities could provide in order to advance a judicial process. Gompertz said that with sound evidence, France would not hesitate to arrest Mingas. According to Gompertz, Mingas's connection with France took the GOF by surprise. French intelligence services took more than three days to obtain even basic information on Mingas.

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Chambard observed that "it was crazy" to hold international soccer matches in Cabinda. It was "strange," he added, that attackers fired a huge number of rounds into the Togolese bus, but did not fire at the Angolan police escort. Gompertz remarked that Angola seems to believe that France somehow supports Cabindan independence, but there is no truth in that assertion -- for France, "Cabinda is Angola." Regarding TAAG, Gompertz asserted that there are viable safety and security concerns about the airline, but that it is an issue Angola needs to address through European Union offices.

SOUTH AFRICA

¶12. (C) Presidential Advisor Marechaux regretted that France had not been able to develop a rapport with South Africa's President Zuma similar to the one that existed with his predecessor Mbeki. President Sarkozy had developed a good personal relationship with Mbeki, which had contributed to Sarkozy's successful visit to South Africa in February 2008, where he gave a major policy speech on France-Africa

relations; his choice of South Africa as a venue for the speech was an indication of the importance France was placing on South Africa as a continental leader.

¶13. (C) Marechaux identified an even more important concern -- what he described as South Africa's failure, under Zuma, to play much of a leadership role in Africa. He cited the absence of South Africa with respect to Madagascar, its diminished role in C.A.R., and its failure to engage in any number of other regional or African issues. He noted that bilateral relations were generally good (despite the lack of rapport with Zuma) and that South Africa was a "reliable partner" on most global issues (G-20, the environment, etc.). He repeated that Africa needed South Africa to play a more active role in Africa's many problems and crises.

MADAGASCAR

¶14. (C) Marechaux said that France had to play a "careful" role in Madagascar, similar to the "care" the U.S. had to take whenever it became involved in Latin America. That said, Marechaux reminded that France had always supported the UN, AU, and SADC in their efforts to find a solution to the crisis in Madagascar. He said that France had tried to facilitate the Maputo I and II processes by offering transportation services to the parties and defraying some of their expenses. He said that both Mediator Chissano and the Malagasy parties had made mistakes and he regretted the unraveling of the Maputo and Addis Ababa agreements. (In her later meeting with Gompertz, DAS Page asked if South African President Zuma was playing any role in resolving the conflict. Gompertz acknowledged Zuma's role only in the early stages of the process.)

¶15. (C) Marechaux explained that France was now urging all parties to reach a consensus agreement on a way forward that would lead to transparent and fair elections. This message had been conveyed in direct terms to de facto President Rajoelina by Sarkozy's Chief of Staff Claude Gueant, Cooperation/Francophonie Secretary of State Alain Joyandet, and Chief Presidential AF Advisor Andre Parant and Marechaux at meetings with Rajoelina during his recent visit to Paris. France's bottom line was that Rajoelina had to accept having two co-presidents, should form a national unity government that would oversee legislative elections, possibly in May, and then, under the direction of a government formed as a result of the legislative elections, move towards a presidential election.

¶16. (C) Marechaux said that Rajoelina "didn't want to hear any of this." While in Paris, Rajoelina met with a parliamentary friendship group that naively made certain public statements supportive of Rajoelina. Marechaux said that Rajoelina's recent call for a "supervisory council" to oversee the transition was another "gadget." Marechaux remarked that the French repeatedly told Rajoelina to forget about unilateral action. He had to operate cooperatively and should accept at least the core elements of what the AU's Jean Ping had been suggesting. Marechaux said that Rajoelina had, the previous day (February 9) expressed some intention to compromise but Marechaux did not know the specifics.

¶17. (C) In a short exchange on Madagascar at the MOD Strategic Affairs Delegation, Colonel Opplert, head of the Africa unit, was generally more pessimistic, expressing strong suspicion of Ravalomanana and stating that the most important concern was to ensure the military's agreement to any plan that developed. There was a risk of violence should the military not be kept on board, he warned. MFA A/S-equivalent Gompertz later noted that finding a solution

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in Madagascar is "very complicated."

SUDAN

¶18. (C) When French officials raised Sudan, they focused on the worrisome instability that could arise should Southern Sudan secede and form a new independent nation following the 2011 referendum. DAS Page explained the importance of an immediate "diplomatic and developmental surge" for Southern Sudan, with additional confidence-building measures and conflict prevention. Gompertz confirmed that France maintains a diplomatic "bureau" in Juba, but that its assistance to Southern Sudan is "not a lot." DAS Page noted that the relatively easy step of converting the bureau into a Consulate would be helpful, as would providing relatively inexpensive technical assistance and training for Southern Sudanese civil servants.

¶19. (C) Leclerc observed that there were many unanswered questions about how the 2011 referendum would take place and many issues that North and South had to resolve either before or as an immediate result of the referendum. He was not certain that they would do so. DAS Page agreed with Leclerc's additional assessment that there were many problems endemic to the South, such as ethnic tensions and conflicts over limited resources, that would plague the South irrespective of the referendum and its result.

¶20. (C) The Africa experts at the MOD's Strategic Affairs Delegation (Opplert, Riche, Chauzal) echoed the Presidency's and MFA's concerns about North/South Sudan issues. Riche commented that France was not heavily present in Sudan (although French engagement in Chad and C.A.R. remained high). She expressed concern about an independent Southern Sudan's "capacity as a state" and about "demarcation issues" that, if left unresolved, could create a host of problems post-independence. Riche noted another uncertainty -- whether the most recent Chad-Sudan rapprochement would hold and, if it did, whether either side would take advantage of the improved relationship to undertake projects that had been put on hold because of previous bilateral friction. Riche mentioned, for example, the possibility that Khartoum might use a lull in tensions with Chad to take an aggressive approach to its Darfur problem.

PRIORITIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

¶21. (C) MOD DAS expert Chauzal, whose specialty is the southern Africa region, provided a brief overview of France's priorities in that zone. He noted that France was seeking to strengthen ties with three countries in Africa -- South Africa, Angola, and Nigeria -- as cornerstones of the partnership France was trying to develop across the continent. Two of these (South Africa and Angola) were in the southern region. Much of France's strategic thinking concerned the resolution of the broader Great Lakes cluster of problems, with the ultimate goal being the stabilization of the DRC and its transformation into a productive state. Thus, he said, France's relations with countries such as Angola and South Africa (and Nigeria as well) in part involved the extent to which these countries could effect positive change in the Great Lakes region and in the DRC. Angola also played an important role in the Gulf of Guinea, he observed.

¶22. (U) DAS Page has cleared this message.

RIVKIN